Explanatory Notes For the 2001-2002 Academic Performance Index Growth Report

These *Explanatory Notes* are designed to assist educators and other interested parties in interpreting the *2001-2002 Academic Performance Index (API) Growth Report*. The *Explanatory Notes* provide details with respect to the Academic Performance Index (API) and growth target calculations beyond the explanations and footnotes that appear on the report.

The Public Schools Accountability Act
The API is the centerpiece of the statewide accountability system in California public education. The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 (Chapter 3, Statutes of 1999) requires that the California Department of Education (CDE) annually calculate APIs for California public schools, including charter schools, and publish school rankings based on these APIs. The PSAA also requires the establishment of a minimum five-percent annual API growth target for each school as well as an overall statewide API performance target for all schools. A school that meets API growth targets may be eligible for awards under the following programs:

- The Governor's Performance Award Program
- The Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act (Chapter 52, Statutes of 1999)

On November 9, 1999, the State Board of Education (SBE):

- Adopted a 1999 base-year API
- Defined the five-percent annual API growth target
- Established an interim statewide API performance target

Base and Growth Reports
The SBE's actions cleared the way for the publication of the *1999 API Base Report* in January 2000. Each annual API reporting cycle includes two reports: a base report, which appears after the first of the calendar year, and a growth report, which appears after school starts in the fall. This pair of reports is based on APIs calculated in exactly the same fashion with the same indicators but using test results from two different years. The 2001-2002 API Growth Report represents the completion of the third API reporting cycle.

The Development of the API
The 2001-2002 Growth API consists of exactly the same components as the 2001 Base API, which was released in January 2002. This includes results not only from the Stanford 9 norm-referenced assessment but also from the California Standards Test in English-Language Arts (CST ELA) of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The methodology for integrating results from the CST ELA was approved by the SBE in September 2001.

Finally, the 2001-2002 Growth API employs the same Scale Calibration Factors (SCF) as the 2001 Base API. The SCF is a numerical constant that is computed by grade span (2-6, 7-8, and 9-11) and then added to each school's API according to the school's grade span.

The SCF may be a positive or negative number. The purpose of the SCF is to enhance the stability and interpretability of the API by ensuring that the statewide average API does not fluctuate solely as the result of adding new API components.

The 2002 Base API is projected for release in mid-February 2003. New components will include results from the California Standards Test in Mathematics and History/Science as well as the California High School Exit Examination will be incorporated into the API. Other legally required indicators, such as graduation and attendance rates, will be added as they become available.

Students Included in the API
The term "valid test scores" as it appears in various API reports is synonymous with the number of students with STAR test results contributing to a school's API. In determining which norm-referenced test results should be included in the API, the CDE employed the same pupil exclusion rules used in calculating school-level STAR results that appear on the Internet at:

<http://star.cde.ca.gov>

1. Stanford 9 results were excluded if the Stanford 9 test administration accommodation for the pupil was more than one grade out of level (e.g., a sixth grader tested lower than 5th grade or higher than 7th grade).

2. Stanford 9 results were excluded if any of the following eleven test administration accommodations were marked "yes" for all Stanford 9 content areas:

   PRESENTATION
   - Braille
   - Directions translated
   - Other
   RESPONSE
   - Marked answers in test booklet
   - Scribe marked answer document
   - Other
   TIMING/SCHEDULING
   - Additional time
   - Additional breaks
   - Other
   USE OF AIDS
   - Bilingual dictionary
   - Other

3. Stanford 9 and CST ELA results were excluded if all content areas were marked as subject to adult testing irregularities.

4. Stanford 9 results for a particular content area were excluded if the percentile rank for that content area was not between 1 and 99.

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5. Stanford 9 results for a particular content area of a pupil record was excluded if any of the following eleven test administration accommodations were marked "yes" for that content area:

PRESENTATION
- Questions read aloud or signed
- Directions translated
- Other

RESPONSE
- Marked answers in test booklet
- Scribe marked answer document
- Other

TIMING/SCHEDULING
- Additional time
- Additional breaks
- Other

USE OF AIDS
- Bilingual dictionary
- Other

6. The Stanford 9 results from a particular content area or ELA results were excluded if that content area was identified as subject to adult testing irregularities.

7. The Stanford 9 results from mathematics were excluded "Calculator/math tables" was marked "yes."

Finally, in order to comply with provisions of the PSAA regarding student mobility, both Stanford 9 and CST ELA results are excluded from the API if the pupil first attended the district in the current year as indicated on the STAR answer document. An exception is made for a student new to a district who has followed a normal matriculation pattern.

Core Elements of the Report
Certain core elements appear throughout the 2001 API Report. They include:

- STAR 2002 Percent Tested
- 2002 API (Growth)
- 2001 API (Base)
- 2001-2002 Growth Target
- 2001-2002 Growth
- Met Growth Target
  - Schoolwide
  - Comparable Improvement (CI)
  - Both Schoolwide and CI
- Awards Eligible

STAR 2002 Percent Tested
This percentage is calculated by dividing the number of students tested by the number of students enrolled on the first day of testing in the grades tested. The total enrollment is adjusted by subtracting the number of students exempted from testing due to Individualized Education Program (IEP) statements and the number of students exempted from testing due to parent/guardian written request. The number is rounded down to the next whole number (e.g., 94.9=94).

The number of students exempted from testing due to IEP statements is derived from the number of students taking an alternative assessment. The other elements are derived from the STAR 2002 Apportionment Information Report.

2002 API (Growth)
The 2002 API (Growth) summarizes a school's performance on the 2002 STAR. It is on a scale of 200 to 1000. It is based on the performance of individual pupils on Stanford 9 (all content areas) as measured through national percentile rankings (NPRs) and on the CST ELA as measured through performance levels. In some instances, APIs are also calculated for student subgroups at a school in order to ascertain whether the school meets the "comparable improvement" criterion (see page 6).

This API was calculated in the same manner as the 2001 Base API. For details on the calculation of the 2001 Base API and 2002 Growth API, please consult the following documents:

- *The 2001 Base Academic Performance Index (API): Integrating the California Standards Test for English Language Arts into the API.* This document is accessible at:

<www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api/yeartwo/growth/int egrate.pdf>

- *Calculating the Academic Performance Index (January 2002).* This document is accessible at:

<www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api/api0102/base/calc01 b.pdf>

The API for schools with grade configurations that include grade spans 6-7 or 8- 9 was the average of the APIs for the grade configuration segments weighted by the number of pupils with valid scores in the segments. For example, for a 7-12 school, the API was the weighted average of the APIs for grades 7-8 and for grades 9-11. This procedure is necessary because the structure of the test varies between grades 7-8 and 9-11.

2001 API (Base)
The 2001 API (Base) summarizes a school's performance on the 2001 STAR.

2001-2002 Growth Target
A school's growth target is calculated by taking five percent of the distance between a school's 2001 Base API and the interim statewide performance target of 800. For any school with a 2001 Base API of 781 to 799, the annual growth target is one point. Any school with an API of 800 or more must maintain an API of at least 800.

2001-2002 Growth
The 2001-2002 Growth is calculated by subtracting the 2001 Base API from the 2002 Growth API.

Met Growth Target
A school met its growth target if it:

- Met its schoolwide 2001-2002 growth target, and

- All numerically significant subgroups at the school demonstrated comparable improvement.

Schools meet the comparable improvement target if all numerically significant subgroups meet their API subgroup targets, which in most cases, are 80 percent of the schoolwide 2001-2002 API growth target. For a full discussion, see the section on "Subgroups," beginning on page 6.

Awards Eligible
Schools that met the following criteria may be eligible for the Governor's Performance Awards Program:

- The schools met the schoolwide five percent annual growth target

- All numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at the schools demonstrated comparable improvement

- The schools demonstrated a minimum of five points growth

- All numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at the schools demonstrated a minimum of four points growth

- Elementary and middle schools had at least 95 percent participation rates in the 2002

STAR; high schools had at least 90 percent participation in the 2002 STAR.

Structure of the Report
The 2001-2002 API Growth Report is composed of:

1. *County and District Lists of Schools*
2. *School Reports*

County and District Lists
These lists include all public schools in a district or county for which the CDE has calculated an API. In addition, the district list summarizes the number and percentage of schools in the district and state that met API growth targets, demonstrated improvement but did not meet growth targets, and failed to demonstrate improvement.

On the county and district lists, the schools are grouped alphabetically by type (elementary, middle, high, and small). Schools with non-traditional grade configurations, e.g., 7-12, have been placed into the school type according to standard criteria established by the CDE. These criteria are available at:

http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api/yeartwo/growth/letters/schdsgn.htm

A sizeable number of public schools do not appear on the API list of schools. These include:

- Schools that did not receive a 2001 Base API
- Alternative schools serving at-risk, non-traditional student populations
- Very small schools with fewer than 11 valid STAR scores

Alternative schools and very small schools participate in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model. Discussions on how best to integrate very small schools into the

accountability system are currently underway for the 2002 Base API.

Schools on the Lists without APIs
Some schools appear on the list of schools without APIs because they have had their 2001 Base or 2002 Growth APIs invalidated. Under regulations adopted by the SBE, this may have occurred for one of several reasons:

- Adult testing irregularities have occurred at the school.
- The API is not representative of the total pupil population at the school.
- Significant population changes have occurred at the school, impacting academic performance.
- The rate of students who have been excused from STAR testing by parent request is equal to or greater than 10 percent (schools with rates between 10 percent and 20 percent have had their APIs reevaluated through standard statistical tests to check the representativeness of the tested population).
- The school failed to test 85% of its students in each content area (both norm-referenced and standards tests).
- The school has unresolved problems with STAR demographic data.

School Report
A *School Report* is generated for each school with API information on the *List of Schools*. In addition to the common core elements, the *School Report* includes:

- Data on subgroups
- School demographic characteristics

Subgroups

The PSAA defines a "numerically significant ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" as a subgroup "that constitutes at least 15 percent of a school's total pupil population and consists of at least 30 pupils." Also, under the law, if a subgroup defined by ethnicity or socioeconomic disadvantage constitutes at least 100 pupils, i.e., at least 100 pupils with valid STAR scores, that subgroup is "numerically significant" and required to demonstrate comparable improvement, even if it does not constitute 15 percent of the school population.

These numerical criteria (15 percent and 30 pupils, or 100 pupils) are calculated on the basis of the number of pupils with valid STAR scores for that subgroup.

The school is responsible for demonstrating comparable improvement only for those subgroups that are numerically significant in both 2001 and 2002.

Ethnic/racial subgroups include:

- African American (not of Hispanic origin)
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic/Latino
- Pacific Islander
- White (not of Hispanic origin)

According to the definition adopted by the SBE, the "socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" consists of pupils who meet either one of two criteria:

1) Neither of the pupil's parents has received a high school diploma

OR

2) The pupil participates in the free or reduced price lunch program.

A pupil who is a member of the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup is also a member of one of the racial/ethnic subgroups. Therefore, it is possible that the total percentage of students in all numerically significant subgroups at a school may exceed 100.

By regulation, "**comparable improvement**" requires that each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of the 2001-2002 schoolwide growth target.

The 2001-2002 subgroup target was calculated by first multiplying the schoolwide target by .8 and then rounding the product to the nearest whole number.

There are four minor exceptions to this rule:

1. For subgroups within schools with schoolwide APIs between 790 and 799, i.e., approaching the statewide interim performance target of 800, the annual growth target is one point.

2. Regardless of the schoolwide API, subgroups already at or above 800 must continue to meet the statewide interim performance target of 800.

In schools with 2001 APIs of 800 or more, subgroups with an API of less than 800 must make growth of at least one point.

In instances where 80 percent of the schoolwide target results in a subgroup target that would exceed the distance from the subgroup API to 800, the subgroup target equals the distance to 800.

School Demographic Characteristics
Along with subgroup data, the *School Report* includes the demographic characteristics on which the school characteristics index for the 2002 API (Base) school rankings will be based. The data for the percentages and rates were collected from two sources:

1. October 2001 CBEDS data collection (information on teacher credentials, multi-track year round participation, and average class size)
2. 2002 STAR student answer documents (information on ethnic/racial distribution, parental education level, participation in free or reduced price lunch program, district mobility, school mobility, the number of English learners, the total number of students tested as well as the number of students excused from testing in accord with IEPs or at the request of their parents)

Regarding information taken from CBEDS:

- It is possible for one teacher to be in both the fully-credentialed and emergency-credential categories; therefore, the total of the percentages for "Fully credentialled teachers" and "Teachers with emergency credentials" may exceed 100.

- Average class sizes were derived from the enrollment data reported on the Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF).

- Core academic courses in departmentalized programs" reflects average class size in the following subject areas: English, Foreign Languages, Math, Science, and Social Science.

Regarding background characteristics derived from the STAR student answer document:

- School mobility is the percentage of students who first attended the school in the current year. It is used as a background characteristic only.

- District mobility is the percentage of students who first attend the district in the current year, excluding students enrolled in the lowest grade at a school. Students who were not enrolled in the district in the previous fiscal year, except for students

who followed a normal pattern of matriculation, are excluded from the school's API.

The School Demographic Characteristics that appear on this report are used in the formation of the similar schools comparison groups for the similar schools ranking on the 2002 API (Base) Report that is projected to appear in mid-February.

STAR 2002 Participation Information
The *School Report* also includes the data elements on which the STAR 2002 Percent Tested (see page 3) is based. These elements include:

- Enrollment in grades 2-11 on the first day of testing
- Number of students excused by IEP statement
- Number of students excused by parent written request
- Number of students tested

These data are derived from the Student Answer Documents submitted to the test publisher, except for enrollment on the first day of testing, which comes from the 2002 STAR apportionment report.